



# Human Development

## Envisioning Self-Reliance

### Introduction

As expressed in the ANPDF II (Afghanistan National Peace and Development Framework), the Government's overarching goals for 2021-2025 are to support the peace, stability and reconciliation process and to build greater self-reliance as a country. To achieve these goals, the Government will need to pay greater attention to the country's human development needs.

#### Human development is about:

- 1) improving the lives that people lead
- 2) creating the conditions needed for this.

To measure progress, **UNDP as the lead UN Agency for Human Development publishes the Human Development Index (HDI) for 189 countries around the world.** The HDI is a summary measure of average achievement in three key dimensions of human development: a long and healthy life, being knowledgeable and having a decent standard of living. In 2018 Afghanistan was ranked at 170th globally. The next HDI update for Afghanistan, which is due in December this year (2020), is expected to show the first decline in the country's score since the HDI was first introduced in 1990, due to the socioeconomic impacts of COVID-19. However, in 2021 if there is progress towards a stable peace and given the Government's renewed commitment to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in the new ANPDF, it may be possible to start addressing some of the negative impacts of COVID-19 on the country's HDI score. UNDP's main role in supporting the Government will be to advise on how to align the country's human development needs with the proposed National Priority Programmes (NPPs) which provide a roadmap for the implementation of the development priorities identified in the ANPDF. The indicators used to measure the progress being made on Human Development also provide a useful bridge between the ANPDF and the 16 Afghanistan Sustainable Development Goals (ASDGs) which were developed by the Government with support from UNDP, to serve as a guide towards sustainable development.

### Challenges

To improve human development, the country needs to address a wide range of socio-economic, political and environmental concerns such as environmental degradation, poor governance, rapid population growth, regional disparities, deep-rooted inequalities, environmentally unsustainable economic growth, significant internal displacement and a predicted increase in conflict in 2021.

To reverse the negative socio-economic impacts of COVID-19, **the priority will be to restore security and human rights through the ANPDF, and bridge the gap between humanitarian & development aid.**

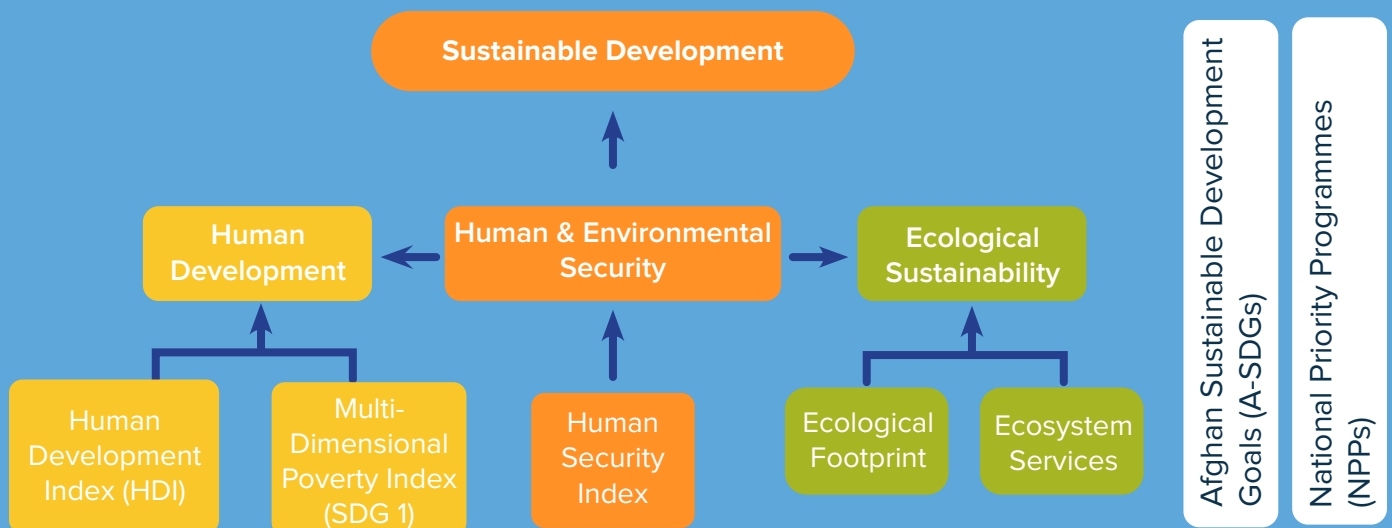
To address the country's economic development needs in the face of **declining revenues**, the Government will need to **diversify its revenue sources and promote a shift from single point investments to transformational systemic investing**

To address growing inequalities and other social and **gender justice issues**, **the country will need to start by putting in place adequate social protection measures**

To address **environmental security concerns**, the issue of environmental degradation needs to be **addressed by ensuring that economic growth and agriculture are as sustainable as possible.**

## Human Development Links

- **HD & Sustainable Development:** As the diagram below shows, human development acts as a critical driver of sustainable development. Just as sustainable development requires a balanced approach to development that focuses on improved economic prosperity, social inclusion and ecological sustainability, so human development cannot be considered separately from human security, environmental security and environmental sustainability issues.
- **HD & the SDGs:** The HDI indicators extend the SDGs and provide another way of connecting to the ANPDF to the A-SDGs. The HDI has 167 Indicators; 73 of these directly relate to 42 different SDG indicators; 94 indicators are unique to the HDI.
- **HD & the Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus:** The foundation of human development is the freedom to choose your own future, so an absolutely essential requirement for future improvements is to ensure that the humanitarian needs of most vulnerable segments of the population are being met. Linking humanitarian and development needs is the next step, but is difficult when development actors do not have access to populations in non-government controlled areas and existing donor funding channels are not designed to allow the provision of speedy development assistance.
- **HD & Resilience:** As COVID has shown, the country was not prepared for the impact of the pandemic on employment in the informal sector, education and healthcare in particular. Protecting HD gains provides greater resilience to future unexpected shocks.
- **HD & Self-Reliance:** To protect any gains made in human development, greater attention will need to be paid to human security and environmental security concerns. Human development is also critically dependent on ensuring environmental sustainability and mitigating the impacts of climate change.



## UNDP's Contribution to Mainstreaming Human Development

In addition to developing annual HD reports for Afghanistan on specific themes, UNDP is developing a programmatic response to the HD issues included in the three priority areas that were identified by the Government in the ANPDF: Peace-Building, State-Building and Market-Building. For example, UNDP is working on building greater trust between citizens and the State primarily through more effective and efficient government institutions, and better functioning security and justice institutions that are more responsive to the needs of citizens.

**UNDP is also working on improving the enabling environment for job creation, improving access to information and knowledge, and promoting systemic improvements to the healthcare system.** However, UNDP's **human rights-based approach to Rule of Law work will perhaps have the greatest overall impact on HD.** Ensuring access to justice, for example, is directly linked to broader HD goals such as greater gender equality and poverty reduction, as well as being at the centre of the Government's commitment to fully achieving the SDGs.

The measure of UNDP's success in advising the government on HD will be a new understanding of the need for greater policy coherence in order to achieve a more balanced and integrated form of economic, social and environmental development.